AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-43. (Canceled)

44. (New) A damper for an air flow duct comprising:

ducting;

a damper element in the ducting and movable between a first, closed position and a second, open position;

biasing means biasing the damper element into its closed position; and

retention means for retaining the damper element in an open position;

the retention means comprising:

an actuating member;

a retention member which is fixed relative to the damper element and can be secured by the action of the actuating member to retain the damper element in an open position, which securing can be released by movement of the actuating member to release the damper element so that the latter is moved by the biasing means into its closed position;

a body member which is fixed to an opening in a circumferential wall of the ducting, the body member having a through-hole which passes from an exterior to an interior of the body member; and

a movable member in the through-hole and arranged so that it moves when the actuating member moves, the movable member being arranged such that it protrudes or protrudes further from an opening in the exterior of the body member when the actuating member moves to release the damper element.

45. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the actuating member comprises a temperature-sensitive element for releasing the retention member to release the damper element when the temperature-sensitive element reaches a certain temperature.

46. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the movable member is an axially-movable rod.

47. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the body member comprises a cylindrical casing mounted by a mounting member, said opening in the exterior of the body member being in the mounting member.

48. (New) The damper of claim 45, wherein the body member is extended, the temperature-sensitive element being adjacent one end of the body member and the opening in the exterior of the body member being adjacent the other end of the body member.

49. (New) The damper of claim 47, wherein the casing is an elongate cylinder and the mounting member is cylindrical with a bore in one end receiving an end portion of the cylinder, said opening in the exterior of the body member being at the other end.

50. (New) The damper of claim 45, wherein the temperature-sensitive element comprises a heat-softenable or meltable material which when hard prevents movement of the movable member and when soft or molten permits movement of the movable member.

51. (New) The damper of claim 50, the retention means further comprising a head, the temperature-sensitive element being such that the head can move relative to the casing when said certain temperature is reached, the movable member being in contact with or being contactable by the head when the head moves so that the movement of the head causes the movable member to move and protrude or protrude further through said opening.

52. (New) The damper of claim 51, wherein the casing has a recess, the movable member is within the casing, and the head has a detent engaging in the recess such that when the heat-softenable or meltable material is soft or molten, a force on the head in a direction of its movement with respect to the casing would cam the detent out of the recess in a direction generally at right angles to the direction of movement of the head and

release the head, thereby causing the movable member to move, the heat-softenable or meltable material being between the detent and the casing and being such that said force applies a force on the heat-softenable or meltable material generally at right angles to the direction of movement of the head.

53. (New) The damper of claim 52, wherein the heat-softenable or meltable material is in tension under the action of said force on the head.

54. (New) The damper of claim 51, wherein the head comprises an end piece which is adjacent or abuts the end of the movable member, the end piece having elongate detents which extend outside the casing and parallel to the movable member.

55. (New) The damper of claim 44, the retention means further comprising a fixed backing piece on the other side of the retention member to the movable member so that the movable member can press the retention member against the backing piece.

56. The damper of claim 44, the retention means further comprising a sprung piece fixed to the ducting and acting as an engaging member such that the actuating member can engage the sprung piece to press the sprung piece against the retention member.

57. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the damper element is rotatably mounted for movement between its closed position and an open position, and the retention member is generally sector shaped.

58. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the retention member has a number of recesses or cut-outs for engagement directly or indirectly by the actuating member, to provide a number of different open positions of the damper element, of various degrees of opening, a camming arrangement being provided so that the respective recess or cut-out

will cease to be engaged and the damper element will move into its closed position when the actuating member exerts no pressure on the retention member.

59. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the protruding end portion of the movable member actuates a microswitch.

60. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the body member and movable member are in the form of a removable cartridge.

61. (New) The damper of claim 60, modified in that there is no body member and movable member, the cartridge not being present, the retention member being releasable by acting externally on said movable member.

62. (New) The damper of claim 44, wherein the retention member is releasable by acting externally on said movable member.

63. (New) The damper of claim 62, wherein the movable member is biased inwards by external biasing means which can be released to release the retention member.

64. (New) The damper of claim 63, wherein the external biasing means is a solenoid.

65. (New) A thermally-actuated mechanism, comprising:

a movable operative member which can move between a first position and a second position;

means biasing the operative member into the first position; and

a thermally-actuated cartridge for retaining the operative member in the second position, against the biasing of the biasing means, the cartridge comprising:

a temperature-sensitive element;

a head associated with the temperature-sensitive element, for movement when the temperature-sensitive element reaches a certain temperature to thereby release the operative member;

a movable member which is caused to move when the head moves; and

a body surrounding the movable member and having an external opening through which the movable member can protrude;

the arrangement being such that when the thermally-sensitive element reaches said certain temperature, the movable member moves and protrudes or protrudes further through the opening.

66. (New) A damper for an air flow duct comprising:

ducting;

a rotary damper element carried on an axle in the ducting and movable between a closed position and an open position;

biasing means biasing the damper element into its closed position; and

retention means retaining the damper element in an open position;

the retention means comprising:

an actuating member;

a retention member which is fixed relative to the damper element and is secured by the action of the actuating member to retain the damper element in an open position, which securing can be released to release the damper element so that it is moved by the biasing means into its closed position; and

a support member fixed to the circumferential wall of the ducting and supporting at least part of the retention means, the support member having a base and at least a first limb, at a substantial angle to the base, which limb is adjacent the inner circumferential wall of the ducting and has a notch on its open end passing over the damper element axle; and

securing means securing the limb to the inner circumferential wall of the ducting at a position between the axle and the base of the support member.

67. (New) The damper of claim 66, wherein the support member has a further limb on the opposite side of the retention member to the actuating member, which further limb acts as a backing piece and

wherein the support member has a further limb in the form of a sprung piece on the same side of the retention member as the actuating member, which sprung piece is pressed against the retention member by the actuating member when the damper flap is retained in an open position,

whereby when the damper flap is retained in an open position, the actuating member presses the sprung piece against the retention member which in turn is pressed against the backing piece.